

The hole in the road *called school climate*



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Breaking through the myths

Answer the questions true or false

1. Bullying is mostly a male behavior.
2. Once a bully always a bully.
3. Bullies come from families representing all socioeconomic levels.
4. Bullies have average grades in school.
5. You can spot bullies because they are agitated and aggressive.
6. Fighting back against a bully will not stop the behavior.
7. Most bullying happens at school.
8. Bullies are insecure and have low self-esteem.
9. You change a bully's behavior by focusing on what happens at home.
10. Bullies are not physically larger than their victims.
11. Targets of bullies are usually kids with physical differences (overweight, red hair, etc.).
12. Most bullying involves physical aggression.
13. Bullies don't need therapy in order to stop bullying.
14. Bringing together the parents of the victim and the parents of the bully does not help.
15. Other children should stay removed from the bully/victim conflict or they'll get bullied as well.

Characteristics of those who bully

- ✓ Most children who bully have role models, such as parents, who also display aggressive behavior.
- ✓ Those who bully really like to bully and find it exciting.
- ✓ Those who bully are excited by the reaction of their victims, whether it be crying or fighting back.
- ✓ Those who bully enjoy being in control and like to win in all situations.
- ✓ Since those who bully usually get what they want, they are rewarded by the bullying behavior.
- ✓ Those who bully don't feel empathy or compassion for their victims, believing that they "get what they deserve."
- ✓ Those who bully usually justify their own behavior through unrealistic expectations, such as "I should always get what I want."
- ✓ Children who bully are not outcasts; instead they usually have a small network of friends.
- ✓ Girls who bully are more likely to use verbal harassment and exclusion from activities.

Passive victims are likely to be children who:

- ✓ Generally do not invite attack as would provocative victims
- ✓ Are often alone and isolated during the school day
- ✓ May use money or other bribes for protection
- ✓ Can be anxious, low self-esteem and lacking in social skills
- ✓ May have a disability that is either physical or mental
- ✓ Can have a learning disability
- ✓ Usually lack humor
- ✓ May carry a weapon to protect themselves
- ✓ Are social outcasts, such as being last picked for games and activities.

Provocative victims are likely to be children who:

- ✓ Can provoke attack from bullies
- ✓ Continually irritate their peers
- ✓ Can be diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- ✓ Tend to perpetuate the conflict, but never win
- ✓ May be clumsy and few social skills
- ✓ May be mislabeled as bullies.

List of level one consequences

1. Create anti-violence posters and place them in school halls
2. Implement a “random act of kindness”
3. Write a formal essay from both points of view (victim & aggressor)
4. Restitution for anything that is destroyed
5. Walk a mile in someone else’s shoes by role-playing the victim
6. Do something nice for a victim of bullying (requires adult supervision and victim willingness)
7. Stay after school and help a staff member out
8. Make a presentation in a class about pro-social behaviors
9. Ride a middle or elementary school route as a “bully-buster”
10. Referral to peer mediation program
11. Being assigned as “protector” of a victim of bullying (requires adult supervision and victim willingness)
12. Write a report on a social leader, such as Martin Luther King
13. Tutor another student in a mastered subject area
14. Discuss the incident with a different teacher
15. Write a report analyzing feelings, thoughts, actions and then consequences of the incident at hand
16. Call home and explain what happened
17. Write a formal letter of apology
18. Complete a violence review worksheet
19. Discuss the incident later with the teacher.

Quality consequences worksheet

OUCH	LIGHT BULB	RESTITUTION
Miss recess	Think sheet	Apology
Last in line	Chill skill	A gift
Call home	Mediation	Act of kindness
Clean bus	Teach a skill	Make it right
— — — — —	— — — — —	— — — — —
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- *“Ouch” – make it natural or logical*
- *“light bulb” – we want learning happening*
- *Restitution – they must make it right*

Supporting the victims ⁱ

1 - Have a plan for reporting bullies

Bullying is vastly underreported because children are intimidated. Encourage all kids—targets and observers—to report incidents. Explain that this is not tattling but information you need to make school safe for everyone. Reinforce that you are committed to keeping targets safe from reprisal.

2 - Talk privately

Let the student know that it is not his or her fault. Listen to the child's feelings and explain that you will do all you can to help. Strategize with chronic bully targets by rehearsing responses. The first time you do this, have the child play the bully so you can model realistic ways to react. Also, help targets develop friendships by teaming them up with more socially skilled students for cooperative projects.

3 - Help kids resist bullies

Targets typically reward bullies by giving them an emotional payoff, such as the satisfaction of seeing how the behavior hurts, or material benefits, such as handing over lunch money, toys, or other possessions. While not responding the way the bully wants can be difficult, it's a powerful strategy. Remind kids that standing up for oneself doesn't mean countering aggression with aggression. Teach kids to take slow breaths, keep a passive face, and to repeat to themselves, "I can handle this."

4 - Teach assertive skills

Ignoring a bully is often not enough—he or she keeps at it. Teach all children to be assertive by standing straight, looking the bully in the eye, and saying "Stop bothering me" or "Don't do that. I don't like it" or "I'll report you if you don't stop." Then teach children to walk away.

Changing the bullies ⁱⁱ

1 - Keep records

Each time you verify a bullying incident, record the time, date, place, and names of children involved. Also keep a record of what intervention strategies you try.

2 - Talk privately

Remind the child of your school and classroom rules and consequences regarding bullying. If it is a group of children who are bullying, talk with each child individually.

3 - Emphasize the positive

Because bullies generally have high self-esteem, esteem-raising activities are not very useful. Instead, focus on the social skills bullies lack. For example, bullies rarely feel empathy, so activities that enhance students' ability to see other points of view are helpful. Get bullies involved in cooperative activities, supervise them so they don't create a new area for bullying. Praise them when they demonstrate respectful behavior. Changing patterns is not easy, so look for small signs of success.

4 - Develop a behavior contract

Because many bullies repeat specific types of behavior, individual contracts can help. For example, one contract might state: "I will not trip anyone, and if I do the consequence will be missing recess for two days." Have the child sign the contract.

5 - Contact parents

Parents need to know if their child engages in bullying behavior. Dan Olweus has found that 50 percent of the time, the parents of a bully are alarmed to hear of this behavior and cooperate with the school in setting limits.

Resources

Endnotes

ⁱ Taken from *Smart Ways to Handle Kids Who Pick on Others* by William Kriedler, Instructor, September, 1996

ⁱⁱ same

Additional materials

- Bitney, James. *No-bullying Program: Preventing Bully/victim Violence at School*. Minneapolis: Johnson Institute, 1996.
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- Garrity, Carla, et al. *Bully-proofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools*. Longmont, Colorado: Sopris West, 1994.
- Kreidler, William J. *Creative Conflict Resolution: More Than 200 Activities for Keeping Peace in the Classroom K-6*. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1984.
- Olweus, Dan. *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. London: Blackwell Publishers, 1993
- Rembolt, Carole & Zimman Richard. *Respect and Protect: Violence Prevention and Intervention Program*. Minneapolis: Johnson Institute, 1996.
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